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*By*

Thomas J. S. McGrath, S.J.

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# What Catholics Do Not Believe

THOMAS J. S. MCGRATH, S.J.

*(This lecture was delivered at the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Duval and Ocean Street, Jacksonville, Fla., on Tuesday evening, October 23, 1928, and was printed in the Florida Times-Union of that city Wednesday morning, October 24.)*

"And this I pray that your charity may more and more abound in knowledge, and in all understanding" (Philippians i, 9).

To old P. T. Barnum, one of the founders of the circus that is playing in Jacksonville tonight, has been ascribed the words "The American public loves to be fooled." If "Barnum was right," I can readily see why so many foul charges against the Catholic Church and Catholics themselves have been given such wide publicity, and child-like credence.

But it has been my experience as a public speaker for the last seven years that an American audience, and therefore the American people, are fairminded and honest and want to know the truth. If they have been deceived, through no fault of their own, they are the very first to acknowledge the deception and give the lie to the false charge. I gave this lecture on "What Catholics Do Not Believe" for the first time Thursday, March 10, 1921, in Holy Rosary Church, Pittsburgh, Pa., and have been incorporating it into practically every dogmatic series of lectures I have given in the South and Southwest since then, and once broadcast it by special request, in Miami, about two years ago. As a matter of course, therefore, I incorporated it into this two weeks' series here in Jacksonville at the Immaculate Conception Church. As is evident, in a lecture of an hour or an hour and a quarter, it is utterly impossible to refute all the calumnies that have been uttered against the Catholic Church and Catholics

in the matter of religious belief. I shall, therefore, confine myself to the most glaring.

Catholics do not believe that all Protestants go to Hell after death. We do not pretend to know the secrets of men's souls or the Divine judgments of God to such an extent, as to say who go to Hell and who do not, other than this that those are condemned to Hell after death who die in the state of mortal sin, and at enmity with God, whether they be Catholics, Protestants, Jews or Gentile.

I cannot do better here than to quote the words of Pope Pius IX, found in his encyclical letter to the Bishops of Italy of August 10, 1856. He says:

> We know—and you know—that persons who are in invincible ignorance of our holy Faith, who are careful to observe the natural law and its dictates, graven as they are by God in the hearts of man, and who lead an honorable and righteous life, can, with the aid of Divine light and grace, acquire eternal life. For God perfectly sees, searches, knows the spirit of men, their souls, thoughts, and habits; and in His supreme goodness and boundless mercy He permits no one to suffer eternal chastisement who has not been guilty of voluntary transgressions.

There is an axiom among Catholic theologians that says: *Facienti quod se est, Deus non denegat gratiam.* This can be translated: "God does not refuse His saving grace to anyone, who is doing all in his power to follow his conscience." Consequently we Catholics do not believe that anyone who has always kept the Commandments and followed the dictates of his conscience goes to Hell after death.

As a corollary of what I have already said I might add that we Catholics do not believe that we should hate those who are not of the Catholic Faith. Here again let me quote from that same encyclical letter of Pius IX:

> Far be it, however, from the children of the Church to become the enemies of such as are not united to us by the ties of religious faith and charity. On the contrary, they are bound to render such persons all the services prompted by Christian charity, whenever they find them in poverty, in sickness, and in distress of any kind; they should assist them in every way.

I can truthfully say that I am a Catholic priest today

because of a Protestant, Dr. William Gerry Morgan, of Washington, D. C. Some four years after beginning my ecclesiastical studies I developed constant and incessant headaches that made study an impossibility. In my distress I put myself in the hands of this wonderful specialist. For over a year he worked on my case and eventually freed me from my affliction and I was able to continue my studies for the priesthood and reach my goal in 1918. Could I have for this Protestant physician anything but the holiest sentiments of love? I write to him every year for Christmas and Easter and pray for him every day of my life.

I might also add that the dearest friend I have on earth is a Protestant, a member of the Methodist church, son of a Methodist minister and grandson of a Methodist bishop, and a 32d-degree Mason, Dr. John O'Rush of Mobile, Ala., with whom I became acquainted in 1914 while I was athletic director of Spring Hill College, Mobile. He assisted me in my athletic difficulties, secured me a star coach and, moreover, went out to the college every afternoon, sacrificing thousands of dollars from his practice to be of assistance to me and the college I represented. He put Spring Hill on the football map, and it would be the quintessence of concentrated ingratitude on my part were I to have for this Protestant gentleman anything but the sentiments of deepest love. Dr. John O'Rush today would mortgage his home to procure money for me were I in need of it and could obtain it through no other means. No, my dear friends, Catholics do not believe that it is a part of their religion to hate those of other denominations.

The second thing that Catholics do not believe is that all Catholics go to Heaven when they die. We do not believe that being baptized in the Catholic Church gives a person a free passport to the kingdom of God, regardless of how he lives.

Listen to the Council of Trent that says: "If anyone says that he knows with absolute certainty that he will surely obtain the wonderful gifts of final perseverance, unless he has received a special revelation from God to that effect, let him be anathema." Does that sound as if the

Catholic Church teaches that all Catholics are sure of salvation?

Such a teaching would be contrary to the Scriptures for we read in the book of Ecclesiastes, ix, 1: "Man knoweth not whether he be worthy of love or hatred." And Philippians, ii, 12, says: "With fear and trembling work out your salvation."

This is a dogmatic mission I am giving here in Jacksonville, but those of you who were present at the moral mission in the spring of 1925, given by Rev. J. B. Franckhauser, S.J., and myself will recall that we preached sermons on sin, Hell and Judgment, and we preached them to Catholics and for their benefit. If we believed that all Catholics, regardless of how they live, are bound to go to Heaven when they die, why would we preach sermons on sin, on Hell and Judgment?

A third thing that Catholics do not believe is that American Catholics owe temporal allegiance to the Pope. This seems to be a bugbear with many of our American people and the name of "Pope" is like a red flag to a bull. The Pope is a very peaceable man who has received thousands of American tourists of all denominations, and has never yet been known to harm a single one of them. But the matter of allegiance to the Pope is something that many do not seem able to get straight.

There are two kinds of allegiance: spiritual and temporal. Spiritual allegiance is "fidelity and obedience to a supreme ecclesiastical ruler in things of the soul, in things spiritual, in things religious." Temporal allegiance is "fidelity and obedience to a supreme civil ruler in things of State."

Now is it true that American Catholics owe allegiance to the Pope of Rome? I answer with a distinction. It is true that American Catholics owe spiritual allegiance to the Pope of Rome. It is absolutely false that they owe or pay him any temporal allegiance. The Pope commands us Catholic Americans to abstain from flesh meat on Friday as a penance, to hear Mass on Sunday, go to confession once a year, receive communion during the Easter time, and like things of a spiritual nature. And we American

Catholics obey him in these spiritual matters because it is a part of our religion. And we, as American citizens, do not owe any apology or explanation of our religion to any other fellow American because our national Constitution guarantees us liberty of conscience in the matter of our faith.

But as for temporal allegiance, we American Catholics owe it and pay it to one supreme civil ruler and to one supreme ruler only, and that supreme civil ruler is Calvin Coolidge, President of the United States, a Protestant. And we are sworn to defend, even with our heart's blood, one national flag and one national flag only, and that flag is America's Star Spangled Banner.

But some one may ask: "Don't you American Catholics owe any kind of temporal allegiance to the Pope of Rome?" I am going to take my Jacksonville audience into my confidence tonight, and tell them exactly what kind of temporal allegiance we owe to him, but under condition that you keep it an absolute and inviolate secret. Please do not divulge it to anyone, and especially to the Pope himself. Strain your ears for I am going to whisper it. Listen closely. We Catholics of America owe and pay to the Pope of Rome the same temporal allegiance that we owe and we pay to old King Tut of Egypt whose mummified body was unearthed in 1923 by Howard Carter and Lord Carnarvon.

And as long as we are speaking about the Pope, let me bring in another thing that Catholics do not believe. Catholics do not believe that the Pope of Rome is incapable of committing sin. There is an old saying that "you can't argue against a stubborn fact." And it is a stubborn fact that Alexander VI was an immoral man. In his official capacity he was a good executive, but in his private life it is a pretty well established fact that he did not wear the wings of angels.

Some one may object: "But don't you Catholics hold that the Pope of Rome is infallible?" To which I answer, yes, we do hold that he is infallible, but we do not hold that he is impeccable or incapable of commiting a sin. I explained in my sermon Monday night what we Catholics un-

derstand when we speak of the infallibility of the Church. We understand the same by the infallibility of the Pope. When we speak of the infallibility of the Pope we do not mean that he is incapable of committing sin, but we do mean that when he speaks in his official capacity as the head of the Church, or, as it is technically known speaks *ex cathedra,* and speaks to the whole Church, defining a matter of Faith or morals, he cannot fall into error. Just what grounds we have for holding this doctrine I cannot explain this evening, as it forms a separate lecture that takes me at least one hour to deliver.

As a private individual, the Pope can fall into religious error. While preaching as a private individual the Pope could make a mistake in his doctrine, but not when he speaks *ex cathedra* to the whole Church and defines what is or is not a matter of revealed religion, and what is or is not a sin. So you see that we Catholics, when we say that the Pope is infallible do not mean to say that he cannot commit sin.

Catholics do not believe, either, that the Pope or the Church can make new doctrines of Faith. There is an axiom in the Church ascribed to St. Nicholas, Pope, that runs: *Nihil innovetur, nisi quod traditum est;* which means, "Let nothing new be brought in except what is sanctioned by tradition."

Some one may ask, "But do not the Popes and the Church make what you Catholics term infallible definitions in matters of Faith from time to time?" To this objection I answer that they "define, but do not create or make doctrines." Now what is the difference between the two? I shall answer by means of an illustration.

Mr. Joseph Stanley, let us say, is sick unto death, and his wife calls in Dr. Peter Murphy on the case. After examining the patient thoroughly, Dr. Murphy says, "Mrs. Stanley, your husband has double pneumonia." What would you think of Mrs. Stanley were she to run to her neighbor and hysterically cry, "Dr. Murphy has given my husband double pneumonia?" As is evident, Dr. Murphy did not create the disease, but simply defined or declared that the patient suffered from double pneumonia.

In like manner when the Pope or the Church defines a doctrine they merely state officially that such a doctrine is part of the deposit of Faith left with the Apostles. For instance, when the Church in the Council of Nice in 325 condemned Arianism because it denied that Christ was Divine; and when, moreover, in this same council, the Nicene Creed was formulated that says that Christ is "true God of true God, consubstantial with the Father," it did not make Christ Divine nor did it make the doctrine. It simply declared that it was, and had been, a part of Catholic Faith that Christ was Divine. And so on for the other definitions that have been declared in the course of the centuries.

I now come to another charge against the Catholic Church, and I am going to ask that those of you who hear what I say tonight spread the information. Catholics do not—please note this "not" and note it well—Catholics do not believe that all the marriages between Protestants are null and void, or that all children born of Protestant parents are illegitimate. This is a calumny against the Catholic Church that has spread from one end of the country to the other, and I brand it tonight as an infamous lie.

The decree "Ne temere" of Pius X and the marriage laws as found in the book of Canon Law are binding on Catholics, where one or both of the contracting parties belong to the Catholic Church.

This Canon Law (1099, Paragraph 2) says: "Non-Catholics, whether baptized or unbaptized, if they contract marriage among themselves are in no wise obliged to follow the Catholic laws."

Let me make this matter clearer by means of an example. Joseph Stanley, a Methodist, falls in love with Mary Jones, a Baptist, and asks her to be his wife. She consents and the marriage ceremony is performed by his minister or hers, or by any minister of any other denomination, or by a justice of the peace, civil judge or notary public—in a word, by anyone authorized by the State to perform marriages. The Catholic Church holds that this is a real and valid marriage not merely legally, but in the eyes of God Almighty, and that the children born of this

marriage are in every sense of the word legitimate children. Is that clear?

It is not clear enough for me yet. Patrick Murphy, an Irish Catholic, falls in love with Bridget Callahan, also an Irish Catholic, and asks her to be his wife. She consents. And, as they are going to Rome, they agree to be married by the Pope. Let us say that they are married by Pope Pius XI, with two Cardinals of the Catholic Church as witnesses. Catholics hold that this is a real and valid marriage, and the children born of it are legitimate children. But they do not hold that the marriage is any more real or valid than the marriage between Joseph Stanley, a Methodist, and Mary Jones, a Baptist; nor that the children born to these Catholic parents are any more legitimate than the children born to the Protestant parents. Is it clear now?

But I am going to make it clearer still. Let us say that Joseph Stanley, the Methodist, quarrels with Mary Jones, his Baptist wife, and gets a divorce from her. Now let us further suppose that he afterwards falls in love with Anna Murray, a Catholic, and asks her to marry him. Miss Murray, let us say, does not know that Mr. Stanley has a living wife, and consents to become his bride. They come up to Father J. Meehan or Father P. Doyle here at the Church of the Immaculate Conception, to make arrangements for the marriage, and the priest, after greeting them cordially, invites them to be seated. He then turns to Miss Murray and asks: "Miss Murray, are you entering upon this marriage freely?" To which she answers: "Yes, Father." He further asks: "Miss Murray, is Mr. Stanley related to you within the third degree of kindred," and gets as his answer: "He is no relative at all." He next asks: "Miss Murray, have you ever been married before?" At this question, Mr. Stanley begins to squirm in his chair. After Miss Murray has answered in the negative, the priest turns to Mr. Stanley and asks the first two questions he had asked Miss Murray. Then he comes to the third, and says to Mr. Stanley: "Mr. Stanley, were you ever married before?" He admits that he was, and the priest asks again: "Is your wife living or dead?" Mr.

Stanley truthfully answers: "My wife is living still, but I procured a divorce from her, and now want to marry Miss Murray here present." With a serious look on his face, the priest then says to Mr. Stanley: "Mr. Stanley, if you have a living wife, you cannot marry Miss Murray as long as your wife is alive." To this answer Mr. Stanley rejoins: "But, Father, both my wife and myself are Protestants, and we were not married by a Catholic priest, but by a Protestant minister." "That does not make a particle of difference, Mr. Stanley," the priest answers. "Your marriage with Mary Jones, a Baptist, was a real and valid marriage, binding until death, and as you have a living wife, you cannot marry Anna Murray." "But, Father, I will become a Catholic in order to marry her," says Mr. Stanley. To this the priest answers: "If you wish to take instructions and, after you are convinced that the Catholic Church is the right one, you wish to enter it, I shall be glad to receive you into the Catholic Church. But even though you become a Catholic, Mary Jones still remains your legitimate wife, and you cannot marry Anna Murray as long as Mary Jones is alive."

But some one may say, "What about the Marlborough-Vanderbilt marriage that was recently declared null and void by the Catholic Church? Were not the Duke of Marlborough and Miss Consuelo Vanderbilt both Protestants and members of the Episcopal Church?" To all such questions, I answer yes. The objection may further be urged: "Does not this declaration of nullity give the lie to your statements?" To this I answer, that it gives the lie to my statements only in the minds of those who jump at conclusions from unsubstantiated premises, gathered, for the most part, from hearsay or meager newspaper reports. What was the reason why this marriage of two Protestants, performed in a Protestant church by a Protestant minister was declared null and void?

I shall first tell you what was not the reason and then what was the reason.

The reason was not because the contracting parties were Protestant or because the ceremony was performed in a Protestant church by a Protestant minister.

The reason why it was declared null and void was because Consuelo Vanderbilt never gave her free consent to this marriage. She went through the ceremony, but her free consent was never there.

Any lawyer, whether he be a civil or canon lawyer, will tell you that a bilateral contract is null and void, and has no binding force if it be entered into under coercion. Both parties must be free agents, acting freely, otherwise the contract is invalid *ipso facto*. It matters not what the nature of this contract is—business, political or matrimonial.

Therefore, if Consuelo Vanderbilt was not a free agent acting freely in the marriage ceremony with the Duke of Marlborough, a necessary condition for the validity for a bilateral contract was missing, and the marriage contract, consequently, invalid, null and void.

Was her free consent missing? Let the documents presented in the case give the answer. Consuelo Vanderbilt herself, in a sworn statement said: "My mother tore me from the influence of my sweetheart. [She was in love with a man by the name of Rutherford and not the Duke.] She made me leave the country. She intercepted all letters my sweetheart wrote, and all of mine to him. She caused continuous scenes. She said I knew very well I had no right to choose my husband, and that I must take the man she had chosen; that my refusal was ruining her health and that I might be the cause of her death. There was a terrible scene in which she told me that if I succeeded in escaping, she would shoot my sweetheart, and she would, therefore, be imprisoned and hanged and that I would be responsible."

Mrs. Vanderbilt, the mother of the seventeen-year-old girl, admitted the truth of this statement when she testified: "I have always had absolute power over my daughter. When I issued an order nobody discussed it. I did not beg, I ordered her to marry the Duke."

Mrs. Lucy Jay, an aunt of Consuelo, when asked: "Do you believe that the means used to force the marriage were moral persuasions or actual coercion," replied: "No persuasion at all. Coercion absolutely. This I am aware of; this I know."

Another aunt of Consuelo, Mrs. Tiffany, said under oath: "My sister was constantly making scenes and tried to soften her daughter by saying that she was suffering from heart disease and would die if Consuelo would continue to cross her."

"That Consuelo was coerced is further shown by the fact that her mother, fearing that Consuelo might at the last moment change her mind and retract her consent to marry the Duke, which had been abstracted from her, placed a guard at the door of her room, on the day of the wedding, so that nobody could speak to or even approach her."

The Duke himself testified that "she came twenty minutes late and seemed very much disturbed."

With these sworn affidavits to be guided by, the Catholic Church pronounced that the marriage of 1895, between the Duke of Marlborough and Consuelo Vanderbilt, was a marriage entered into under coercion and duress, lacking the free consent of one of the contracting parties and was, therefore, null and void from the beginning.

The Catholic Church did not nullify a valid marriage but simply declared that the supposed valid marriage was null and void from the beginning for the reasons that I have given. The Church did not untie the marriage knot, but simply declared that, because of the lack of free consent on the part of Consuelo Vanderbilt, no marriage knot was ever tied.

Why did the Catholic Church pronounce on this marriage between two Protestants? Because it was asked by Consuelo Vanderbilt herself to give a decision on it.

Why did Consuelo apply to the Catholic Church and not to the Episcopal Church of which she was a member? You will have to ask Consuelo that question yourselves. It is her business and she has never communicated to me her reasons.

Why did she not apply for this decision before 1925? Again, my dear friends, I shall refer you to the lady herself. I may add, however, that twenty days after the marriage she told the Duke that she had been coerced into the marriage.

A natural question for people to ask is: "How does the Catholic Church look on the two children of this marriage?" I shall answer in the words of the Canon Law, Canon 1114: "Legitimate children are those conceived or born in a valid marriage; or in a marriage contracted in good faith though invalidly."

Catholics do not believe that the Catholic Church should control American politics. American Catholics are in politics, yes, just as American Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Jews, and Gentiles are. But the Catholic "Church" is not in American politics nor is it seeking to control them. There is an old saying, "What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander" and if it be unfair to say that the Baptist or the Methodist Church is trying to control American politics because Baptists and Methodists run for political office, so, too, is it unfair to say that the Catholic Church is trying to control American politics because Catholic Americans are running for office.

If the Catholic Church were trying to control American politics there should be a Catholic party, and there is no such thing as a Catholic party and I hope there never will be here in our American nation, where our American Constitution guarantees freedom of religious worship, and expressly states that no religious test shall be required for any office in the land.

If the Catholic Church were trying to control American politics, the Bishops and the priests should receive instructions from Rome concerning them. No such instructions have come from Rome. I have been a priest now for over ten years and have never heard a single instruction from Pope, Cardinal, Archbishop, Bishop, or fellow-priest as to how I am to cast my vote nor have I ever directed Catholics which way to scratch a ballot.

Because a man is a Catholic is no guarantee that he is going to get the Catholic vote. As proof of this let me advance the instance of Bouanchaud and Fuqua who were running for the Democratic nomination for governor of Louisiana in the election of 1924. Bouanchaud was a Catholic, Fuqua a Protestant and a Mason. New Orleans is a city that is 75 or 80 per cent Catholic and it is a matter

of historical record that not only was Bouanchaud the Catholic overwhelmingly defeated by Fuqua, a Protestant and Mason in the State, but also was overwhelmingly defeated in the Catholic city of New Orleans; and I have been told that the majority of the Catholic priests voted for Fuqua. Recently in Savannah, Ga., which has a large Catholic vote, Victor G. Schreck, a Catholic, and a practical Catholic, was defeated by John L. Cabell, a Protestant, the full term vote being 5,380 to 1,432.

If the Catholic Church were trying to control American politics, politics should be preached from the Catholic pulpit. And that is one subject, my dear friends, that is positively not preached from a Catholic pulpit.

To clinch this argument that the Catholic Church is not trying to control American politics let me quote from a lecture of Bishop John D. Dunn of New York, broadcast over Station WLWL December 8, 1926. He says:

> I have been a Bishop for five years, and I give you my word that never during that period have I engaged in any sort of political activity, nor have I attempted, except by exercising my right to vote, to elect any candidate to any office. Before being a Bishop I was a priest for twenty-five years, and I give you my word that I never even heard of any Bishop telling a priest how he should exercise his right of suffrage. Nor did any of the thousands of priests whom I know ever instruct parishioners how to vote.

There is absolutely nothing to justify the suspicions that the Catholic Church uses its influence to elect Catholics to office. Fortunately, we have certain facts that will go far to prove this contention and to make plain to every fairminded man that there is no such thing as an organized Catholic vote.

According to the latest available figures the total population of the United States in 1925 was over 113,000,000. The Catholic population was over 16,000,000 or 14 per cent of the total. It is easy to see that if Catholics obtained representation in proportion to their number they would form 14 per cent of the House of Representatives and the Senate, whereas, in fact, they form but 7 and 5 per cent respectively. In other words, if there were any such thing as a Catholic vote, the House would include 61 Cath-

olics instead of 32 and the Senate would include 13 Catholics instead of 5.

Looking at these facts from another point of view, we may recall, as a matter of common knowledge, that Catholics are the largest religious group of the United States, forming 34 per cent of the total church membership, which is about 46,883,000. On that basis, out of 390 Congressmen with religious affiliations, Catholics would have 132 members instead of 32 and out of 85 Senators with religious affiliations, would have 29 instead of 5.

The situation becomes even more interesting if we compare the different religious groups. Methodists number nearly 9,000,000 or nearly 8 per cent of the total population. On a numerical representation they would have in Congress 34 members, whereas, actually they have 90. In the Senate they would have 8 members, whereas actually they have 28.

Baptists number over 8,000,000 of the total population, or slightly over 7 per cent. On a numerical representation they would have in Congress 32 members, whereas actually they have 46. In the Senate they would have 7, whereas actually they have 5.

Episcopalians number over 1,000,000 of the total population, or about 1 per cent. On a numerical representation, they would have in Congress, 4 members, whereas actually they have 61. In the Senate they would have 1 member, whereas they actually have 23.

And now we come to another question that is frequently brought up, although it has been refuted time and time again, namely the difficulty of the Bible. Catholics do not believe that they are not allowed to read the Bible. Not only are Catholics allowed to read the Bible, but are encouraged and urged to do so. Let me quote again from the highest official in the Catholic Church, the Pope. Pope Pius VI in a letter to Most Rev. Anthony Martini, Archbishop of Florence, dated April, 1778, said:

> At a time that a vast number of bad books, which most grossly attack the Catholic religion, are circulated, even among the unlearned, to the great destruction of souls, you judge exceedingly well, that the Faithful should be excited to the readings of the

Holy Scriptures. For these are the most abundant sources which ought to be opened to everyone, to draw from them purity of morals and doctrines, to eradicate the errors which are so widely disseminated in these corrupt times.

In the Council of Baltimore, held in 1884, and composed of the American hierarchy, this decree was passed:

The American Catholic Bishops, assembled in the Council of Baltimore, say to their people: It can hardly be necessary to remind you, that the most highly valued treasure of every family and the most frequently and lovingly made use of, should be the Holy Scriptures. We trust that no family can be found amongst us without a correct version of the Holy Scriptures.

Catholics can and may procure a copy of the Bible at any Catholic bookstore without the permission of anyone and are urged to read it. Not only that, but special spiritual favors are granted by the Church to those who read the Gospels every day for a quarter of an hour. I have given out many Bibles by way of presents to Catholic laymen, requesting them to respectfully peruse its contents.

Is it necessary for me, my dear friends, in this present age of enlightenment to tell you that Catholics do not believe that an indulgence is a permission or a license to commit sin? Catholics do not believe that an indulgence is a permission or a license to commit sin. And I cannot do better here than to quote from the ten-cent catechism that little Catholic children learn at school. Question 231 asks: "What is an indulgence?" and answers, "An indulgence is the remission in whole or in part of the temporal punishment due to sin." Question 232 asks: "Is an indulgence a pardon of sin or a license to commit sin?" and the answer is, "An indulgence is not a pardon of sin nor a license to commit sin and one who is in a state of sin cannot gain an indulgence.

Catholics do not believe that they must pay for absolution when they go to confession. As a missionary engaged in mission work since 1921, I have heard confessions by the thousands and tens of thousands and have yet to receive so much as one copper cent for the absolutions that I have given. If a penitent were to offer me money in the

confessional, even though it were in payment of a just debt, I would not receive it there for fear that some one might think I were being paid for absolution.

One time out in Oklahoma, while giving this same lecture, I called upon a 12-year-old boy to stand before the congregation and answer some questions. "Son, when did you go to confession last?" He answered: "This morning." "To what priest did you go?" and the answer was, "To you." I then asked: "And how much did you pay me for absolution?" "I didn't pay you nothing." The audience laughed and I further asked, "Suppose that I had told you that you would have to pay me a dollar, what would you have answered?" The child replied, after a moment's hesitation, "I would have told you that I didn't have it." The audience laughed again and then I further asked, "Did you ever pay for absolution when you went to confession?" and he answered, "Never." "Did you ever hear of anybody else paying for absolution when he went to confession?" And the child rejoined, "I never did." To keep my audience from thinking that these questions and answers had been prearranged I further asked the child, "Did you know that I was going to ask you these questions when you came into the Church?" And the boy answered, "No."

Another difficulty is concerning the matter of statues and images. Catholics do not believe that statues and images are to be adored. Again let me quote from the above mentioned ten-cent catechism. Question 341 asks: "Does the first commandment forbid the making of images?" and the answer is, "The first commandment does forbid the making of images if they are to be adored as gods, but it does not forbid the making of them to put us in mind of Jesus Christ, His Blessed Mother, and the saints." Question 343 asks: "Is it allowed to pray to the crucifix or the images and relics of the saints," and the answer is, "It is not allowed to pray to the crucifix or images of the saints, for they have no life nor power to help us, nor sense to hear us." Again, question 344 asks: "Why do we pray before the crucifix and images and relics of the saints?" and answers: "We pray before the cruci-

fix and the images and relics of the saints, because they enliven our devotion by exciting pious affections and desires, and by reminding us of Christ and of the saints, that we may imitate their virtues."

I have noticed, and right here in Jacksonville, many buttons of Mr. Herbert Hoover and Governor Alfred E. Smith. Does anyone think of accusing men of idolatry because they are wearing the image of their favorite candidate? Never! Would anyone accuse a mother of idolatry because she kisses and presses to her heart the picture of a child who had perished like a blossom on her bosom? They wouldn't think of it. Does anyone accuse our American government of idolatry when he goes into the hall of fame at Washington and gazes upon the statues and images of our great men? Never in the world. Then why should we Catholics be accused of idolatry when we erect statues and images to Christ or Christ's heroes in our churches and our homes?

Catholics do not believe either that the oath, as found in the Congressional Record for February 15, 1913, is the genuine oath taken by the Knights of Columbus. You have, no doubt, heard of this famous so-called "oath" of the Knights of Columbus. It makes its rounds every once in a while and this morning I picked up a copy of it here in Jacksonville. This infamous oath, purported to be the genuine oath of the Knights of Columbus, is a criminal calumny and an infamous lie. It has been maliciously concocted and is so infernal and diabolical that I can't see how any fair-minded man, regardless of his religion, and with two fingers of forehead and an ounce of sense, could possibly believe it to be true. Nobody could take such an infamous oath, by which he promises and swears that "he will, when opportunity presents, rip open the stomachs of women and crush their infant's head against the wall" and be a good Catholic. My blood boils when I think that my fellow Americans could be guilty of thinking out, printing or distributing such a Hell-born, infamous, satanic and diabolical lie.

That this oath is a libel is proved even to a brainless man, by the following: The Knights of Columbus have a

standing reward of $25,000 to anyone who proves that this bogus Knights of Columbus oath is genuine.

Moreover, a commission of four Masons, composed of Motley Hewes Flint, 33d degree; Dana Reid Weeler, 32d degree; William Rhodes Hervey, 33d degree, and Samuel E. Burke, 32d degree, after an examination of the ceremonials and obligations, made for the purpose of ascertaining whether or not this alleged oath of the Knights of Columbus were genuine or not, made the following statement on October 9, 1914:

> We find that neither the alleged oath nor any oath or pledge bearing the remotest resemblance thereto in matter, manner, spirit or purpose is used or forms a part of the ceremonies of any degree of the Knights of Columbus. The alleged oath is scurrilous, wicked and libelous and must be the invention of an impious and venomous mind.

The libelous oath got into the Congressional Record in the following manner: Eugene C. Bonniwell was contesting the election of Hon. Thomas Butler, elected to Congress from the Seventh District of Pennsylvania. This bogus oath was circulated during the campaign, and was read into the record by Mr. Bonniwell to show, as he contended, the unfair methods taken to defeat him, a Catholic, by the spreading of copies of this infamous lie as campaign literature.

Mr. Butler, himself, expressed his regret that this bogus oath was used against his adversary, declaring that he had nothing to do with its publication or circulation.

So you see this oath got into the Congressional Record merely as a quotation and the fact of it being in the Congressional Record is no guarantee that it is the genuine oath of the Knights of Columbus. For the sake of my fairminded American audience, I shall now read the genuine oath.

> I swear to support the Constitution of the United States. I pledge myself, as a Catholic citizen and Knight of Columbus, to enlighten myself fully upon my duties as a citizen and to conscientiously perform such duties entirely in the interest of my country and regardless of all personal consequences. I pledge myself to do all in my power to preserve the integrity and purity of the

ballot, and to promote reverence and respect for law and order. I promise to practice my religion openly and consistently, but without ostentation, and to so conduct myself in public affairs, and in the exercise of public virtue, as to reflect nothing but credit upon our Holy Church, to the end that she may flourish and our country prosper to the greater honor and glory of God.

Could any American demand a pledge of better Americanism and more honest citizenship?

Finally, my dear friends, Catholics do not believe the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of Jesus Christ, is equal to or greater than her Divine Son. I shall not do more tonight than deny that Catholics put the Mother of Christ even on a level with her Son. For He is Divine and she is human only. I invite you to return to this church tomorrow night and hear first hand the attitude of Catholics towards this maiden of Galilee when I shall preach a sermon entitled, "The Peerless Woman of All Time."

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In conclusion let me tell you a story. It is not a mere tale but a story that is true and actual, and I got it from one who knows the parties concerned.

Out in one of our Western States two little boys of eight and ten used to go every afternoon across the street to play in a city park. One day they were met in the park by a middle-aged, poorly dressed woman with a sweet but careworn face. She talked to them and played with them and every day their friendship grew.

Each day, as they entered the park, this middle-aged, poorly dressed, sweet but careworn faced woman met them and gave them candy, chewing gum, marbles or such like inexpensive toys to play with. One day, when they returned home, they enthusiastically spoke to their mother of their newly acquired friend and as they gave descriptive details of her, a frown spread over the face of their mother, and in an irate tone she said: "Boys, don't let me ever hear of you speaking to that old woman again. She is a witch and intends to do you harm. If she ever attempts to come near or speak to you, run away, and if

she tries to follow, pelt her with stones that you will find along the roadside."

The next day, according to custom, the two boys went in the afternoon to the park to play, and were there met, as usual, by this same middle-aged woman, poorly dressed and with the sweet but careworn face. When she saw them, she arose from her bench and approached them with little toys in her hands. At sight of her the boys stopped still, and cried aloud: "Don't come near us! Mother has told who and what you are! You are an old witch, and want to do us harm!"

Dumfounded, this middle-aged woman made steps to approach the boys but was met with a shower of stones, followed by the words: "You are an old witch seeking to do us harm." Drawing her shawl around her face, she sat down on the bench and wept, while the boys made their speedy escape and their close friendship ceased there and then.

Years wore on and when these two boys had entered into man's estate, their father died and the mother, in order to drown her sorrow, went away on an extended trip while they took care of their father's business.

Some days after her departure, an elderly lady, bending under the weight of many years, came to the office of the two boys and closed the door behind her.

"Boys," she said, "I have come on an important errand. I have come to tell you a bit of family history. Do you remember when you were little boys of eight and ten, how you used to go to the park and play, and how you formed a close attachment to a middle-aged woman, poorly dressed and with a sweet but careworn face?"

"Yes, we remember her well," the older one replied. "That old witch that mother told us to keep away from and pelt with stones. And I remember, as if but yesterday, the afternoon we carried out mother instructions."

Brushing away a tear from her eye, the elderly lady drew her chair closer to the two boys and said: "Boys, the one that told you to pelt that middle-aged woman with stones was not your mother. When you were little tots of one and three, your father fell in love with his stenographer,

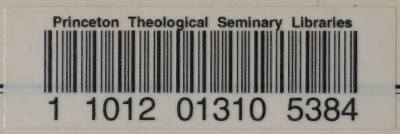
divorced your mother, and married the young girl in his office. Your real mother was that middle-aged, poorly dressed, sweet-faced woman whom you called a witch and pelted with stones so many years ago."

"Great God in Heaven," they said together, "is it possible that we have called our own mother a witch, and pelted her with stones! In the name of heaven where is she now?" "In the poorhouse, pining her life away," was the answer they received.

Closing their office and hiring a carriage the two boys went to that charity home, called for that middle-aged, poorly dressed, sweet-faced woman, pressed her to their hearts and flooded her face with tears. They brought her to their home and cared for her till death. Yes, cared for her whom they had run from, pelted with stones in years gone by because she had been represented to them as a witch.

My dear brethren, is it possible that any of you has been pelting with stones your mother Church because she has been represented to you as a witch? I do not blame you for running away from her and pelting her with stones, if she has been represented to you as a witch by one or other of the charges that I have refuted tonight.

Dear friends, for forty-two years I have lived in her embrace and for ten years, unworthy though I be, I have served at her altar and do testify tonight that she is not a witch, but the truest and tenderest mother, with a mother's mind to know and a mother's heart to feel. And her arms are ever outstretched to receive back to her bosom and to press to her heart those of her children who have fled from her and perhaps even pelted her with stones because she was represented to them as a witch.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